CAT TALES

IN VERSE

by Elliot Walker

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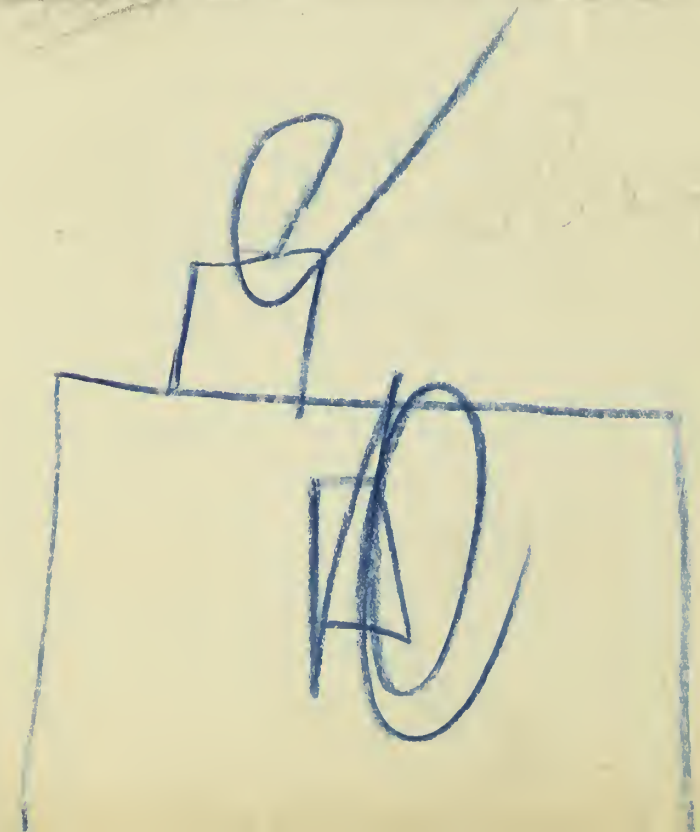

CAT TALES

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IN VERSE

WRITTEN BY

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ELLIOT WALKER

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Mr. Elliot Walker was born nearly forty-five years ago at Pittsfield, Mass.; his boyhood was passed among the beautiful Berkshire hills. An ardent love for trout fishing he has always had, and the many solitary expeditions taken among the mountains and along the wild streams of that famous region, have developed in him a natural love of Nature in all her forms. This will be quickly appreciated by those who read his verses; even these attractive "Cat Tales" show in many ways his disposition to touch upon the simple natural surroundings which his subjects reach.

Enjoying the best private school instruction in early childhood, he entered the public schools for which Pittsfield is justly famed, and graduating from the old Town Grammar School at the head of his class, he entered the High School with a number of boys, now well known Williams College alumni.

His taste for composition and declamation during his school years was marked by all, and now, as time has brought him to the point of writing for the public, much will be found in his work to interest.

At the age of eighteen he entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at Boston, but remained there only a few months, leaving to enter upon a business career since followed successfully.

THE PUBLISHERS.

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Araminta.

OUT on my shady, rose-decked
porch I sit,
My interested neighbors enter-
taining
With stories of intelligence and
wit,
Due to the cats who've always had my train-
ing.
I dilate on the persevering style
With which I bring them sense of house-
hold scheme,
I praise their honest ways—yet all the while
Araminta's in the pantry, stealing cream.

I speak of many a well-directed cuff
It pained me to inflict, but it was due
To much-beloved pets who'd had enough,
But failed to understand when they were
through.
A cat should be reproved, much as a child;
Perhaps they know more—strange as it may
seem.
And while I praise their ways, so soft and mild,
Araminta's in the pantry, stealing cream.

My interested neighbors bend their ears,
And ask me if cats haven't pilfering ways.
I state that from experience of years,
Upon the whole, their honesty I praise.
"Well-educated cats will hungry go,
Before they pilfer." As I gladly beam
Upon my listeners, saying it's not so,
Araminta's in the pantry, stealing cream.

The table manners of my furry friends
I dwell upon, as showing that they know,
With slight correction, how to make amends
For small mistakes. It only goes to show,

Their appetites—tho' naturally sharp—
Can be corrected, same as ours, I deem.
While on the virtues of my pets I harp,
Araminta's in the pantry, stealing cream.

My friends are quite converted to my views;
Each has a tale of some loved cat to tell;
We all bend forward, not a word to lose,
When from the kitchen comes a sudden yell.
We start, aghast. My ears alone detect
The angry tones of cook's disgusted scream;
A direful charge, the last I should expect,
"Araminta's in the pantry, stealing cream."

Lady Jane.

YOU were a lady, through and through,
And we were very fond of you,
Although you were a little shrew,
Lady Jane.

Your beauty was a thing of note.
You wore a lovely Maltese coat,
And a white spot beneath your throat,
Lady Jane.

Also white stockings on your feet.
You always kept yourself as neat
As any one upon the street,
Lady Jane.

Aristocratic blood you showed.
Your ways were always "à la mode,"
Though independence was your code,
Lady Jane.

Your slender form was full of grace;
You had a most attractive face,
And haughtily preserved your place,
Lady Jane.

Truest affection you did show
Towards the friends who loved you so—
For enemies, a ready blow,
Lady Jane.

Your anger was a thing to fear;
The sharp white teeth, the flattened ear,
The lashing tail, the feline sneer,
Lady Jane.

Were ever ready if you saw
A chance with your uplifted paw,
Upon some hated dog to score,
Lady Jane.

But human friends you never hit;
You never scratched, you never bit,
Although you very often spit,
Lady Jane.

Your kittens, which you'd often get,
Provided many a household pet,
And some of them are living yet,
Lady Jane.

When good old age had made you gray,
We found one pleasant summer day,
That you had calmly passed away,
Lady Jane.

We laid you down in peace to sleep,
Looked sadly at the little heap,
And then we went away to weep,
Lady Jane.

Cassius.

I WENT into a neighbor's house
One night, to make a call;
When on the frightened air arose
A hideous caterwaul.
A strange, fierce yell, so very near
I jumped up from my chair,
And really felt a sudden fear
That some wild thing was there.
"What's that?" said I. "Are strange beasts nigh?
Will they come in and gnash us?"
The girls all laugh—"Don't be a calf,
Why, that is only Cassius!"

I heard a scratching at the pane,
And angry at my blunder,
I pushed aside the curtain white,
And there I saw, "by thunder!"
A weird black face, two fiery eyes,
Peer wickedly in mine.
I jumped again in scared surprise,
And gave a startled sign;
"Don't look at it—you'd have a fit;
Don't stir, don't raise that sash!"
The girls guffawed—"Sit down, you fraud;
Why, that is only Cash!"

"Good night," said I, "he's coming in,
And I have got to go.
There's something evil in his grin,
He's after me, I know.
Of course I'm very fond of cats—
But really I can't stay!

Which one is mine among these hats?
I've got to get away!
Yes, I'm not very well, I fear."
The girls once more guffaw,
And hurry me with, "Cassius, dear,
Just see him to the door."

Kitten Gray.

IS there anything so witching
As my little Kitten Gray?
How she frisks, how she whisks,
In her pretty, idle play;
How she chases for her tail
Which forever gets away;
How she prances, how she dances,
In the sunny summer day.

"Oh, my love, there's a dove;
It looks quite as large as you.
How you crouch, how you slouch,
And you mean to get it too.
Oh, you naughty little witch,
I shall have to get a switch,
Just to teach what I preach.
On your wicked little back
You will feel, for your weal,
Quite a smarting little whack.

"Now it's gone, little Gray;
Did you think it would stay?
Play away, while you may,
For it really doesn't pay
To try to catch the dove;
It is very much above
Such a little cat as you,
And I guess you know it, too.

"What surprise in your eyes,
And your tail is such a size!
How you sneak, how you peek,
And your hair begins to rise;

How you flee up the tree,
And you really frighten me,
For my neighbor's dog you see,
And I know you don't agree.

"Come down, pray come down;
I will hide you in my gown,
For the dog is not around,
And you really make me frown.
It's no fun in the sun,
And I'll surely go away.
In my arms you alight
In a fright, but all right;—
Run and play all the day,
Naughty little Kitten Gray."

Old Grim.

'TWAS long past midnight; just the time
When life is at its lowest ebb;
The hour when scoundrels, steeped in crime,
Enmesh in their burglarious web
The household silver; forks and knives,
Spoons, ladles, cups, alike they take;
And when the morning light arrives,
You swear because you did not wake.

That gloomy, rough December night,
A man in bed lay sound asleep,
Wrapped fast in blankets warm and tight.
He could not hear those footsteps creep—
The muffled sounds of dreadful men,
Effecting entrance to his home.
How peaceful were his slumbers then.
His thoughts in quiet dreamland roam.

But in the kitchen there were eyes
That saw strange forms come in the door;
And little ears in wild surprise,
Heard whispers never heard before.
Unlocked, the pantry door stood wide,—
A soft gray shadow flitted through.
Along the dining-room it hied,
And up the staircase wildly flew.

Upon the sleeping man it jumped,
And horribly it startled him.
Its tail was large, its back was humped.
A stuttering, "What's the matter, Grim?"
Was all the waking man could say.
"Why, it was nothing but the cat!
But surely 'tisn't nearly day;
Why did Grim spit and growl like that?"

A sudden sense of something wrong
Flashed to his half-unconscious brain.
He did not hesitate for long,
For now the situation's plain,—
The pantry door was always locked;
The cat had come through while he slept.
He quickly his revolver cocked,
And down the stairway softly crept.

A sudden flash, a sharp report,
Then yells and oaths and flying feet.
The miscreants hurried safety sought,
And soon were running up the street.
The household screamed in sad affright,
And Grim set up a doleful cry.
But soon, assured that all is right,
To quiet down they bravely try.

A careful estimate of spoons,
And forks, and other silverware,
Rendered all grateful for their boons;
For every little thing was there.
The gallant man who fired the gun,
Was quite a hero in his way,
But after all was said and done,
Grim was the hero of the day.

Yes, Grim, old Grim, the kitchen cat,
Whose ways were somewhat rough and wild,
Was ever treated, after that,
As if he were an only child.
Upon the parlor rug he'd lie,
And nothing was too good for him;
For he had saved the family
From spoliation—good old Grim.

The Proper Man.

I SAW somewhere not long ago,
A saying wise and true,
And thinking it is worth my while,
I tell it now to you.
'Twas this:—"A woman's always safe
In marrying a man
Who's fond of cats;" I think it's so,—
Just try it if you can.

A man to whom the cats appeal
Has very tender ways.
He may not be a pious man,
Nor one who gets much praise,
But you will find a sympathy—
An honest heart and true,—
A generous soul, a helping hand.
Does that appeal to you?

He's apt to be a modest man
Who won't be pushed too far,
For he has temper underneath,
Though he avoids a jar.
He has a lot of plain ideas
Of what he thinks is right,
And while he "puts up with a pile,"
He's competent to fight.

Now if you wish to married be,
What is it that you seek?
Though riches, wealth and family
Might tend to make you meek,
Your life must not be thrown away
For such vain dross as that.
Cast such aside and try to get
A man who loves a cat.

An Evening Episode.

NLY a kitten wandering on
the street,
Wet and bedraggled,
pitiful to see,
Hungry and frightened, at
my very feet.
I'll let it go—it don't belong to *me*.

None of *my* business. What a fool I am
To stop and listen to its plaintive mew,
And see it is not stepped on in this jam.
It's nothing but a dirty nuisance too.

Good Lord! it's clutching at my trousers leg!
I must not stop, I've got to catch that car.
It's raining hard. My gracious, see it beg!
I'll have to take it up. "Well, there you are!"

Yes, there you are, and also here am I!
Really the greatest jackass in the town.
There comes my car; thunder! it's going by.
"Let go my coat, I've got to put you down.

"You won't let go? I wish you wouldn't
purr.
The car is gone; I would that you were too.
Take out your claws. I cannot make you stir.
What in creation shall I do with you?

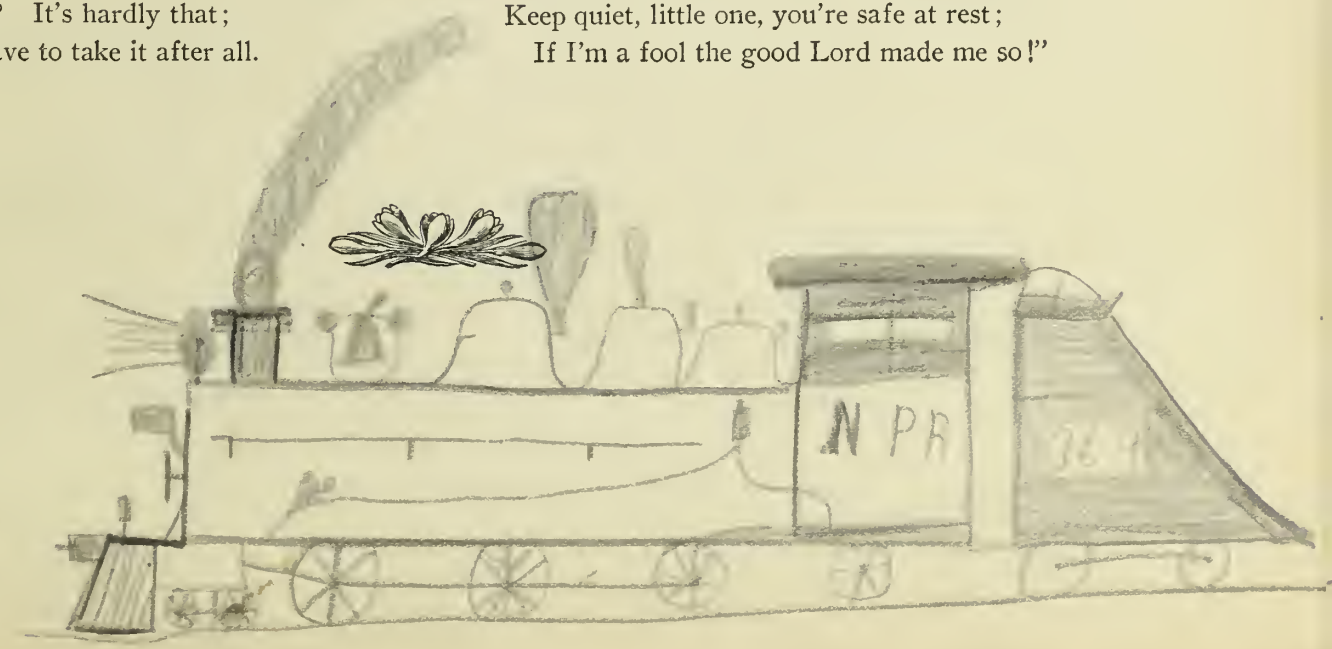
"I'll take you to that bright electric light
And set you down where you can find your
way"—
Pshaw! of course all cats can see at night!—
"Well, you must go, that's all I've got to
say."

Oh, dear, it's nestled right inside my coat.
I swear I think the thing has gone to sleep.
I hear a little drowsy, purring note;—
No, it's impossible for me to keep—

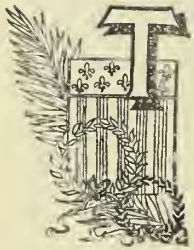
Is it impossible? It's hardly that;
I guess I'll have to take it after all.

I am the biggest fool about a cat!
"Some men would kick you just to hear you squall.

"You're getting warm and dry against my breast.
Here comes another car, and home we'll go.
Keep quiet, little one, you're safe at rest;
If I'm a fool the good Lord made me so!"



The Battle.



HE moon shed bright, on a
summer night,
Her calm refulgence, over
The fields and shades of the
woodland glades,
And the brook, that merry
rover.
She brought in sight with her mellow light,
Those spots where darkness lingers,
And held full sway with her brilliant ray,
And creeping golden fingers.

On an old woodshed, in the silence dead,
At a safe, respectful distance,
With eyes ope'd wide, each the other eyed,
With most malign insistence,
There sat in pride, in the fair moontide,
Two cats, both fierce and lusty;
And they sharped their claws without a pause,
On the timbers rough and musty.

They opened the ball with a warlike call,
Which died away in growling.
Then a mutual yell rose up and fell,
As if the fiends were howling.
Then they hunched along, with a spirit strong,
Till a foot's length barely parted
Their faces fierce—then "cut and tierce"—
And a battle royal started.

They made no noise; they were seasoned boys
Who saved their breath for fighting;
But they went "kerflop" on the woodshed's top,
("Kerflop" 's allowed in writing!)

With splendid grit they clawed and bit,
In the glorious joy of battle.
But they did not see the referee,
Though they heard a window rattle.

A "12 M" shoe from the window flew—
The farmhouse stood quite near them—
And it struck with a thump and made them jump;
Perhaps it did not clear them.

'Twas a gorgeous night for a rattling fight,
But they feared to take more chances.
To the left and right they fled, in the night,
'Neath the moon's approving glances.

Old Tommy.

AMONG refined surroundings you have grown
To corpulence and age; and you alone,
Absorb such wealth of tender sympathy,
Such feminine devotion, such a free
Untrammeled love from those who would not be
Stirred from their thoughts of duty, and agree
That all their kindly acts, and all their pains
To make you comfortable are simply gains
For their own peace of mind; for you are he
They worship to the point of—let me see—
The word I need rhymes poorly—well, let be,
I can't do better—'tis "idolatry."

Your poor blind eye is source of tearful care
To that affectionate, devoted pair.
Your limbs are stiff, and tremble when you try
To cast your weight at some aggressive fly,
Forgetful that the years have pushed you by
The days of youthful, lithe activity.
Your teeth are gone—to some extent at least—
Still 'tis provided that you daily feast
On dainty chops which carefully are "pieced"
With knife and fork, and then with gravy greased.

Your steps out-doors are watched with anxious eyes.
If danger nears, help to your succor flies.
No child was ever guarded with such care,
No epicure was pampered with such fare,

No fragile infant ever took the air
Surrounded by a more persistent prayer.
God bless the tender souls that spend their days
In sweet subjection to their poor pet's ways.
God knows my eyes are seeing through a haze,
I've naught of criticism—only praise.

"Pussy Wouldn't Go."

PUSSY CAT, what *do* you see,
Sitting on the stair?
Why will you not play with me?
There is nothing there!
Only just a little hole—
You can't get in that!
Come and see this nice ball roll,
Foolish pussy cat!

Pussy cat, do come along!
Come, I want to play!
See, this string is good and strong—
What ails you to-day?
Oh, come on and have a game
With the paper rat.
I will make you! Fie! For shame!
Naughty pussy cat.

Pussy cat, you will not stir;—
You are just as mean!
I will rumple up your fur,—
Then we'll have a scene!
My! You gave an awful jump—
Fairly shook the house.
Say, what made you go "kerthump"?
Oh! you've got a *mouse!*

The Evening Call.

HE hour comes when honest folks retire,
When blinds are closed and curtains are pulled down;
The lights go out—extinguished is the fire,
And drowsy quiet settles on the town.

You stand a moment at your open door,
Watching the bats, as to and fro they flit;
You hear a sound you've often heard before,—
An anxious, "Kit, kit, kit, kit, kit!"

A sharp, and penetrating female strain,—
You can't conceal a smile at hearing it.
A pause of nervous listening—then again,
"C-o-m-e, kit, kit, kit, kit, kit! C-o-m-e, kit, kit, kit!"

Some unintelligible words of wrath
You hear, and then the banging of a door.
Kit's in. For her there'll be an aftermath.
Now, go to bed, for quiet reigns once more.

Billy.

I WATCH him from my window as his way
he picks along.
How daintily he lifts his feet, how active
he, and strong.
How graceful are his movements and with
what a cautious fear
He stops and notes the distant sounds which
fall upon his ear.

From the barn he's coming over, and the yel-
low and the white
Of his thick coat are shining in the sunny
morning light.
And my eyes are fascinated with the pretty,
anxious way
He steals across the meadow; and I lift the
sash and say,

"Come, Billy! come, old Billy! there is naught
for you to fear;
Come home and get the breakfast that is wait-
ing for you here.
I'll be down in just a minute, for our usual
morning play,
And I surely will not scold you, for you're
very clean to-day."

He has run across the roadway, he is at the
kitchen door.
He is clawing at the door-knob with his strong
up-reaching paw;
And now he is beside me, rubbing hard
against my legs,
And I think he'll like his breakfast from the
cunning way he begs.

Oh, if you could only see him—how he upright stands and meets
My hand held out to stroke him, and how lovingly he greets
The slightest demonstration of affection that I show—
"I know you love me, Billy—that is what I *want* to know.

"You're a fierce and wiry tom-cat, and your ways at night are queer,
But in your fighting heart you hold a feeling for me, dear;
And you fairly haunt my footsteps when I have to go down cellar.
I always recognize a friend, and you *are* one, 'old feller!'"

Seraphine.

WHEN I was quite a little boy,
Long years ago,
I used to take the keenest joy
That I did know,
In one who every morning came
To visit me;
And presently you'll know her name,—
Just wait and see.

I called her "Seraphina Stubbs";
She was my cat.
You know one very often dubs
With name like that,
Some favorite who never cares
What words are told.
All names are good which Memory swears
To love and hold.

Outside my window lay a roof
Covered with tin;
And daily I, without reproof,
Would let her in.
Each morning she would me awake
In curious way;—
It was a funny mode to take—
Hear what I say!

The only way that she could get
To where I slept,
Was dangerous for my little pet,
And I'd have wept,
If she had fallen from the course
She used to go.
No grief could ever have been worse
For me, I know.

She used to climb a locust tree,
The other side
Of the old house which sheltered me;
And so she tried,
By crawling far out on a limb,
And leaping fair,
To reach the roof. Her chance was slim,
But she got there.

Then up the shingled side she'd run,—
'Twas pretty steep—
And slowly down the other one
She'd boldly creep;
And then above my window-sill,
She'd make a jump,
And on the tin, with echo shrill,
Would come, "kerthump."

Then I would get right out of bed,—
I always did,
And stroke her pretty little head,
As in she slid.
The blinds I think would sometimes stick,
And she would mew.
Now wasn't that a pretty trick
For her to do?

Then to my cot I'd quickly go,
And so would she,
Pawing the quilt and purring so,
To be by me.
And when I settled down to sleep
Without a word,
She cuddled in a little heap,
And purred and purred.

Now my dear little girls and boys—
And big ones too—
This tale of little childish joys
Is all, all true.

It is not real poetical,
As may be seen,
But you will not be critical
Of "Seraphine"!

The Family Cat.

OW many households in this land of ours,
How many foreign homes contain a friend
Who, cuffed and scorned, in a cold corner cowers,
Or, fed and petted in her happier hours,
Holds ever to the *home* unto the end?

Out in the country where the farms are scattered—
A much-loved inmate of the rural home—
How many pleasant paths her feet have pattered,
How many dreams of mice she's rudely shattered,
And yet she does not care afar to roam.

Her strong domestic tastes are very fitting;
She loves the places where the people dwell.
Always around where dear old Grandma's sitting—
Our memory's eye looks back and sees her knitting,
With cat in lap—her favorite tortoise-shell.

In city houses pampered pets receive us,
Archly they greet us with a gentle purr;
Friends of the family they must believe us—
They make no polite effort to deceive us,
Nor from our favorite chair intend to stir.

When grievous trouble hovers o'er our dwelling,
And all our heads are bowed 'neath crushing woe,

How many of us find relief in telling
To little listening ears, while tears are welling,
Our sorrow, which she somehow seems to know?

In many little ways we learn to love her—
Her little coaxing tricks, her doings quaint—
Intelligence we every day discover.

We really do not feel so much above her,—
Like us, she's often bad—oftener a saint.

Yes, in our hearts we often think with sorrow—
We're sure you very often think of that,—
Some time there'll come a very sad to-morrow;
For while it's wrong to foolish trouble borrow,
Our home will lonely be without the cat.

Outside.

ON a cold winter night while the wild
storm is brewing,
We cosily sit, our warm fire before,
And hear something scratching and
woefully mewing;
We know it's the kitten outside the front
door.

In the sharp wintry blast she is dolefully cry-
ing,
In the crack of the door she is dismally spy-
ing,
With her cold little paw she is painfully trying
To get back to heat and to comfort once
more.

"You poor foolish kitten, insisting on going
Out into the storm—so determined to go.
So out you would get, tho' you knew it was
snowing.
You thought you were smart, but how much
did you know?

"Did you think that the wind was like soft
summer breezes?
Do you know that small kittens sometimes get
the 'sneezes'?
Did you find that the frost sometimes painfully
teases?
Would you like to get back to the embers'
warm glow?

"It really is hard to get up from the fire—
To move, when so comfortable, seems like a sin;
But it's growing so cold and the wind's getting higher,—
You've had a good lesson, so we'll let you in.

"Come in, you young rascal, we can't stand your wailing;
You're covered with snow, and your smart tail is trailing;
You are now very meek, though you went out a-sailing.
Get up to the fire, you're wet to the skin."

Uncanny.

HERE is something so peculiar in a cat's mysterious ways,
That I'm inclined to think I hit the mark
In hinting at affinities with beings we can't praise,
And do not like to think of after dark.

Have you noted, on a cosy winter evening, in your chair,
You would start up with a sudden, "Oh, dear me!"
As you caught, intently gazing at a thing that wasn't there,
The feline member of your family?

Have you noticed how she listens with a sharp and anxious ear?
And how she moves her head along the wall?
And you get so very nervous at the things you cannot hear,
That you hardly dare to go to bed at all.

It is only that her senses, preternaturally keen,
At night are very, very wide-awake;
And she looks at trifling shadows on the ceiling or the screen,
That our dull, human vision does not take.

For the very softest footfall of a mouse in distant wall,
Does not escape that most attentive ear,

Which is tuned to fine accordance far beyond
our human call.
Yet it sometimes makes us feel a little queer.

I wish they wouldn't do so, for it isn't very
nice
To have attention drawn from pleasant book,
And nervously imagine—when they only think
of mice—
And feel a strange sensation, when they *look*.

Unexpected.

KITTY, I think you have something to show me,—
I've been expecting you'd bring me good news.
Go and fetch one of them. Surely you owe me
Polite recognition,—you cannot refuse.

"Didn't I make you a bed in the cellar,
Lined with the softest and sweetest of hay?
Go, get one for me!"—She knows what I tell her;
Probably she will go down there and stay.

Where is she making for? where is she going?
Off to that bedroom,—that isn't the way.
What is the matter?—She's usually knowing—
"Kitty, come back! Go down cellar, I say!"

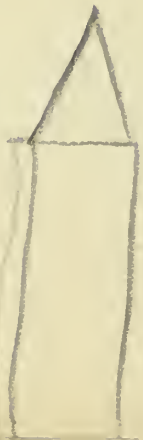
I think I will follow her, only to tease her.
I'll make her go down and bring one of her brood.
She likes to show off, and it doesn't displease her
To drag them upstairs, though her treatment is rude.

Goddess of mercy! She's gone in that closet!
The inviolate place where I keep my best things.
If it's in *there* she has made her deposit,—
Oh, let me hurry—I wish I had wings!

Horror of horrors! Right in my best bonnet!
Oh, such a shock I have ne'er had before,—
Five wretched kittens, all sprawling upon it;
Why did I leave the box there on the floor!

My! this is awful! I wish I had never
Treated that cat as my dearest of friends.
Now all the ties of our friendship shall sever;—
"Never, no, never can you make amends!

"Don't rub up against me, don't try to come near me!
I wish that I never had seen you at all."
My bonnet, my bonnet, my bonnet—oh, dear me!
It cost me just seventeen dollars last fall!



Vindication.

HO said that cats were treacherous?
I'll tell him once for all,
It's a base and wicked slander,
For it isn't so at all.
They evince real, strong affection,
And the most enduring loves.
To friends who treat them kindly,
They are gentle as the doves.

Of course cats have aversions,—
I don't blame them; so have I!
There are several human beings
I can hate, and not half try;
For I feel they are "agin me,"
And would harm me if they could.

The cats have the same feelings,
And it's very right they should.

If they have the feline nature,
And are naturally sly,
'Tis the way the Lord has made them,
And He knows the reason why.
Will you dare to criticise them,
For just being what they are?
Their loyalty, I think, will stand
At something over "par."

You cannot rub a tom-cat's back,
Or lift him by his tail.
He will resent such liberties,
And try to turn the scale.
His teeth and claws are quick to act
In self-defence—that's right.—

If anyone abused you so,
  Would you turn round and fight?

Now as for real, true loyalty,
  I have a case in mind,—
A cat I did not think much of—
  We had not much in kind.
One day, so sick and sore was he,
  That I was delegated
To rid him of his misery,
  And have him "relegated."

I cast about for the best way
  To do the dreadful job;
Then got some strychnine and some meat,
  And rolled a tasty "gob,"
And tempted him to eat the same;
  But he would only chew it;—
I felt just like a murderer,—
  However *did* I do it!

But he got down enough to feel
  That his last day had come.
He staggered off towards the barn,
  Away from his dear home.
I thought of him as dying there,
  In misery and grief;
And when he did not reappear,
  I really felt relief.

In just three days that cat returned,
  And in a fine condition;—
Appeared quite glad to see us all,
  And took up his position.
The strychnine acted as a dose
  Which did him lots of good.
I did *rejoice* to see him back,—
  I never thought I should!

Well, what I started in to say
  Was this:—he must have thought it.

He felt my mother was his friend;
The rest of us all caught it.
He never would have aught of me,
Although I tried to pet him.
I tried *so* hard for his regard,
But never could I get him.

I see him now—just at her feet.
He felt that was his station,
Where he could gaze upon her face
In silent adoration.
His countenance was very plain,
But it lit up with glory.
It was a most amusing thing—
His simple, loving story.

And if she took him in her lap,
Expression most ecstatic
Shone in his eyes in glad surprise;
And if we were erratic,
And laughed and jeered, he never showed
The slightest indication
Of getting mad, for he was glad
To be above his station.

If he could only sit and touch
Her dress which lay beside him,
He seemed to feel a happiness for which
We could not chide him.
He was so plain he was a bane;
The kitchen was his station;
But on her face his eyes he'd place,
In loyal admiration.

The Stranger Cat.

WHEN the cool calm of the evening
settles down,
When the grass is full of busy
insects' hum,
When the dews are falling
lightly,
And the stars are twinkling
brightly
On the darkened meadows' fra-
grant grassy gown,—
This is the time when stranger cats shall
come.

The kitten who has danced and played all day,
Sleeps softly in the porch upon her mat;
While there's naught in Nature stirring,
You may hear her drowsy purring,
As she gently dreams the quiet hours away,
Little thinking of the roaming stranger cat.

You are sitting in the shadow of the vines,
In the tranquil sense of everything so sweet,
And your dearest thoughts are dwelling
On the things that know no telling,
As you think of what your memory en-
shrines;—
And the stranger cat is creeping up the street.

He has noiselessly crawled upward to the mat,
Where the happy, dreaming kitten lies asleep,
And administers a cuff which is very, very
rough,—
A wicked, rude and mean advantage, that,—
It knocks my little pet all in a heap.

The stranger cat has quickly darted off,
Grinning, perhaps, with wicked, fiendish glee,
To think that with his mitten
He has nicely cuffed the kitten,
And at attempt of punishment could scoff.
Has this occurred to you? It has to me.

Pussy's Serenade.

AUTIOUSLY singing to you,
my adored—
Will you not hearken to
me?
Do you not know of the
heart you have
scored,
Beating fast, under the tree?

Why do you linger, my beautiful one,
Can you not answer my call?
Surely you would not my brave presence shun,
Crouching right here by the wall.

Ah! there is danger in coming so near—
Yet I must win you to say
That for your company I discard fear,—
Come to me, loved one, I pray!

So, you are coming! I felt you would come!
Under the hen-coop you were—
I was beginning to think you weren't home—
List to my welcoming purr!

Now I shall sing a most glorious tale;
Far up the gamut I run—
Few like thy lover can sweep down the scale,—
Hark to me, beautiful one!

Lo, you approach with a fiery gaze,
Lovelight I see in your eyes.
Oh, what emotions within me your raise,
How your affection I prize!

Here, do not cuff me and scratch me like
that,—
I loved you a moment ago.
Try it again and you'll get "tit for tat";
You have no right to do so!

Vain my endeavor, by sweet soulful strains,
Trying to win your false heart,—
Only some cuffs have I had for my pains,
In anguish and rage I depart.

Madge.

MADGE is very fair to see,
And she sits upon my knee,
Gazing at me tenderly,
In her way.
In her eyes of depth so rare,
I can see I have my share
Of the love abiding there
All the day.

Much of men she does not know,
And I like to have it so,
For I get a better "show."
Think of that!
Little Madge, upon my knee,—
Oh! you've stuck your claws in me;
Get right down and let me be,
Naughty cat!

A Dollar's Worth.

IMES come when sentiment
And fond affection's bent,
Must hie away;
And common sense must teach
That time will heal the breach,
So sore to-day.

The sad decree was cast,
That he must go at last,
For he was old.
He could no more catch mice—
Besides, he wasn't nice,
And made us scold.

'Twas very hard to slay
The cat who, in his day,
Had been our pride.

In Fortune's fleeting grasp,
For once we got a clasp,
Or he'd have died;—

Our washerwoman gray,
Who lived three miles away,
And had a team—
We won't discuss its style,
For it was worth the while
To help our scheme—

Said she would take the cat;
A little thing like that
She didn't mind;
And he should have a home,
And on the mountain roam,
If he inclined.

It was a lovely plan.
Our gratitude so ran
To such good will,
That we bestowed a sum
(She knew, of course, 'twould come)
A dollar bill.

Tied in a burlap sack,
Without a single crack
For him to peer,
He jolted to the place
Where he should "run his race"—
Three miles from here.

Our grief was most sincere,
For we had held him dear—
The poor old thing.
Of course he had to go;
But still 'twas quite a blow,
And left a sting.

When they arrived at last—
The horse was not real fast;
They left at three,
I think 'twas half-past five
Before they did arrive—
(This may not be,)

A second-story room
Was meant to be his tomb,
For several days.
The windows all were tight,
So he would be all right,
And learn his ways.

A week went by, and we,
Rejoicing to be free
From such a care,
Had just commenced to feel
That all was for his weal,
Now he was there.

When, at the kitchen door,
We heard a scratching paw,
And went to see
What stray had wandered where
It thought there was good fare.
Lo! It was he.

All sore and cut and lame—
I swear it was a shame
To have him so—
For this had come to pass:
He'd jumped right through that glass,
To homeward go.

And how he found the way,
And travelled night and day,
To reach us all,
In hunger and in pain,
Is what we can't explain.
It made us crawl.

Of all delightful things
That good old Memory brings,
This is the best.
The love of home and folks,
Even a cat invokes,—
Think of the rest.

He had come home to stay;
And who should say him nay,
Or do him ill?
This place for him was meant,
And we did not lament
Our dollar bill.

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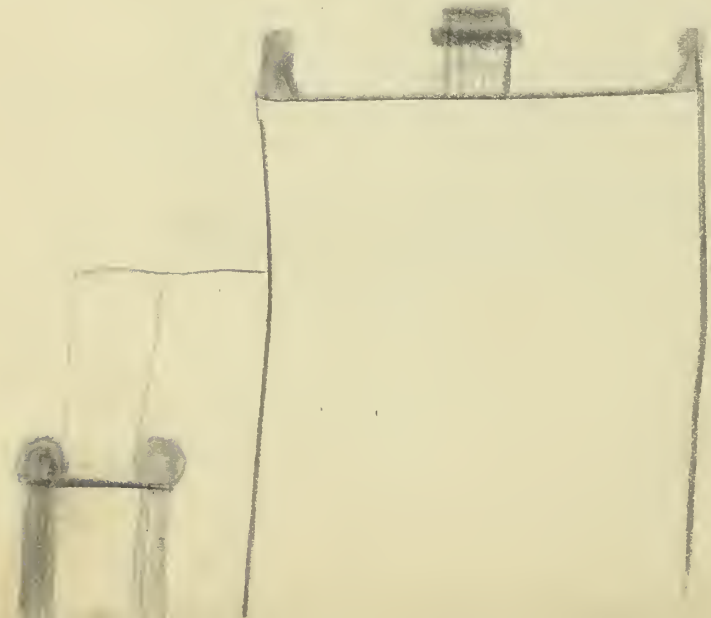

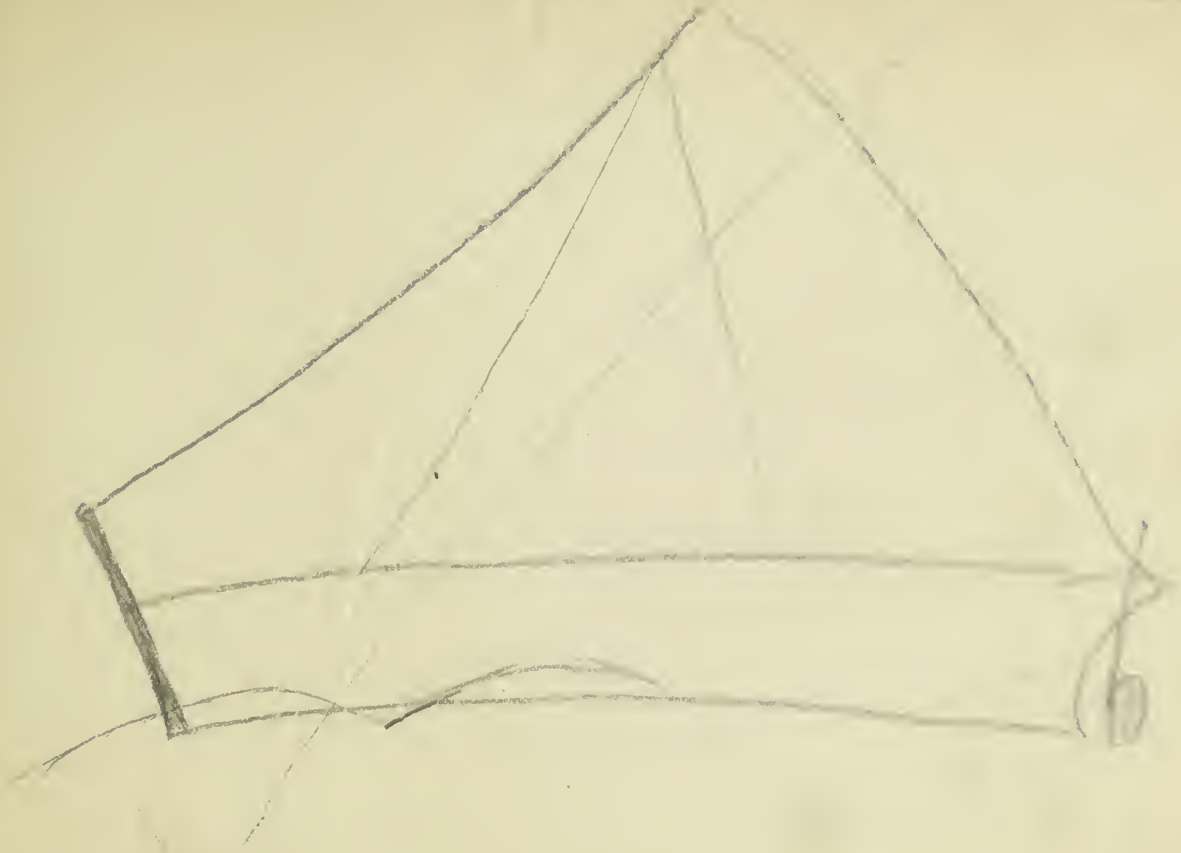

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